

### **IN THE SPECIFICATION**

Please amend paragraph [0013] as follows:

[0013] Network components, such as a PHY or framer, act as conduits for streams of incoming (receive) and out-going (transmit) packets. In addition to handling packets streaming through, these components can also track other information. For example, framers often maintain statistics gauging framer operation such as the number of packets or bytes sent or received. Similarly, a PHY often monitors various statuses such as whether a link to a remote device is up or down. FIGs. 2-9 illustrate techniques that enable components in a packet receive or transmit path to communicate with subsequent components in the path by independently generating packets including information of interest. For example, a PHY can construct and send a packet identifying link status to a component further along in the receive path. Similarly, a framer can construct and send a packet identifying operational statistics. While conforming to the same protocol defined format as other packets traveling along the path, these generated packets can be constructed such that "upstream" components can pull them from the stream of "real" packets traveling along the path. These techniques can, potentially, conserve resources of components receiving the packets. For example, instead of a continually polling a preceding path component for information, the component can simply monitor the incoming stream of packets. Additionally, the techniques can reduce the need for an independent communication channel (e.g., a dedicated bus or a discrete signal) to carry non-packet data between the components.